



STRATEGIC PLAN

2022-2025

Mahomet Public Library District

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THE LIBRARY IN 2021

CHANGES SINCE 2018

The library's previous strategic plan was written in 2018 and outlined several ambitious goals and objectives. Based on this plan, we made many positive changes and additions to our facility, our programming, and our services, despite the global COVID-19 pandemic that surprised us all in 2020.

Facility, Furniture, and Equipment Changes

Offsite Storage: We rented space in a former school building to store books and DVDs that we would otherwise have had to weed from the collection due to our limited shelf space in the library.

Electronic Sign: We installed an electronic messaging system at the front of our property and it has been extremely successful for reaching community members with announcements and program promotions.

Help Desk: We set up a temporary greeter station for pandemic reasons. This station was so popular that we purchased a desk and equipment to make it a permanent help desk/staff workstation.

Wi-Fi Changes: We added a Wi-Fi access point to the parking lot so people can use the internet when we are closed. This originally addressed the community's need for internet access during the months we had limited hours due to the pandemic, but we will continue to offer it going forward.

New Programs and Services

Literacy: We added three early literacy initiatives: (1) the nationwide 1000 Books before Kindergarten, (2) Monday Morning Readers, a weekly read-to-an-adult time in the summer, and (3) Firm Foundations. This last initiative provides programs and support for parents and caregivers and sends a free birthday book to each participating child aged 0-5.

Adult Programming: We added an Adult Programming Coordinator, who created several new popular adult programs, including book clubs, craft programs, and our new and popular "Try Something New Year" programs added to our January line up each year.

Outreach: We took the library out into the community by providing a weekly pop-up library at Candlewood Estates during the summer lunch time offered by area churches.

Pandemic-Driven Changes: Some programs created in response to pandemic limitations were so popular that we will keep them in our regular rotation of offerings. These include our make-and-take craft kits for all ages and the option of using the videoconferencing platform Zoom for certain events, such as our book clubs.

Staffing Changes

Circulation Manager: We promoted one of our experienced team members to the full time Circulation Manager position, focusing on activities and procedures related to our patron experiences when they use the library.

Adult Programming Coordinator: We added this role to focus on developing programming specifically for adults.

Library Leadership Team: Three team members assist the director in evaluating responses to issues as they arise and vetting new ideas or changes to existing procedures.

Additions to Library Collections

Several new types of materials joined our collection: board games, Roku Streaming Sticks with different streaming services, Wi-Fi hotspots, and Wonderbooks (printed books for children with built-in Playaways). We also took the suggestion of one of our patrons and set up a puzzle share station for people to exchange jigsaw puzzles.

Changes to Simplify and Improve Library Access

In response to the previous strategic plan's direction to reduce barriers to access, we instituted many changes, large and small, that help our patrons access and use the library more easily:

- We established an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion committee to review our policies, procedures, and programming and identify areas where we could improve.
- We eliminated overdue fines and charges for replacement library cards.
- We added the ability to register for library cards online.
- We attached various genre labels to our adult fiction books to make it easier for patrons to browse the collection.
- We rearranged portions of the collection to improve browsing and set up more book displays.
- We created a "Lucky Duck" shelf to improve the chance that patrons can check out popular titles more quickly.
- We reached an intergovernmental agreement with the school district to allow us to provide library cards for students who live in the school district, but not in the library district.

OUR COMMUNITY

Demographic Data

The Mahomet Public Library serves Mahomet Township, including the Village of Mahomet. The community has grown consistently since the library was first opened in 1967.

The 2020 census numbers show some irregularities for the Township population and the library is pursuing avenues to confirm the correct numbers. Because the Village boundaries are almost entirely within the Township, the library board is using Village census data to project community growth and needs.

	2010	2020	Difference	% change
Village population	7,258	9,434*	2,176	29.98%
Township population	12,623	13,697	1,074	8.51%

*The Village annexed neighborhoods in 2019 representing approximately 500 people who were always in the Township, but now also live in the Village

Other Demographics:

- The median income is \$113,261 and 50.2% of adults have a bachelor's degree or higher.
- Non-whites represent 10% of the populations.
- The median age is 37.7 years. Children under the age of 18 represent 26.3% of the population (compared to 22.2% statewide).
- There is no public transportation within the community or connecting the area with other nearby towns. Virtually every household (99.4%) has at least one vehicle and 90.7% have two or more.

Beyond the Numbers

The Mahomet community has a reputation for being educated and economically comfortable. While this is true for a significant percentage of the population, there remain those without access to certain resources the library can provide, such as internet access, educational materials, and foundational programs for young learners. Reaching these community members can present challenges since time, transportation, and desire are necessary to use the library and its resources in a traditional manner.

While the library district's borders match those of Mahomet Township, the library actually serves a larger region. The Mahomet-Seymour School District is much larger than the library district, and includes portions of three other townships, including the town of Seymour. These areas are not served by any other public library; we consider these households to be part of the community we serve, although the library receives no tax revenue from those living outside Mahomet Township.

LIBRARY USAGE

Facility

The library moved into a 13,113 square foot building in July 2010. Before the pandemic, the library received an average of over 77,000 visits per year. Visits declined after March 2020, but returned to normal levels by the end of 2021.

The size of the library is small for the needs of the community. The children's area is often crowded with patrons, the shelves are overcrowded with materials, the demand for study rooms and work areas often exceeds the available spaces, and there limited areas for people to gather.

In December 2020, the library began renting a 700 square foot space in downtown Mahomet to store a portion of the library's materials. This alleviated some of the overcrowding on the shelves at the main facility and allowed us to grow the overall size of the collection.

Collections

The library offers physical and digital materials to the community. As of the end of 2021, the library collections included:

Physical Items		Digital Items		Equipment	
Books	44,547	eBooks	51,854	Roku Streaming Sticks	8
DVDs	3,739	eAudiobooks	17,819	Wi-Fi Hotspots	3
Audiobooks	1,979	eMagazines	3,778	Laptops	6
CDs	1,358				
Board Games	47				

Before the pandemic, library patrons checked out 166,000-168,000 items per year. Fewer materials were checked out beginning March 2020, when library usage decreased overall, but numbers began to improve in the fall of 2021.

Programs

The library offers programs for all ages, but sees the highest participation from children and families. Participation in programs for adults was growing rapidly before the pandemic. As of the end of 2021, the library continued to have limited in-person programming inside the library building, but participation in the take-and-make kits and outdoor programming was strong.

	Participants
FY 18-19	9,610
FY 19-20	9,428
FY 20-21	6,071
July –December 2021	3,167

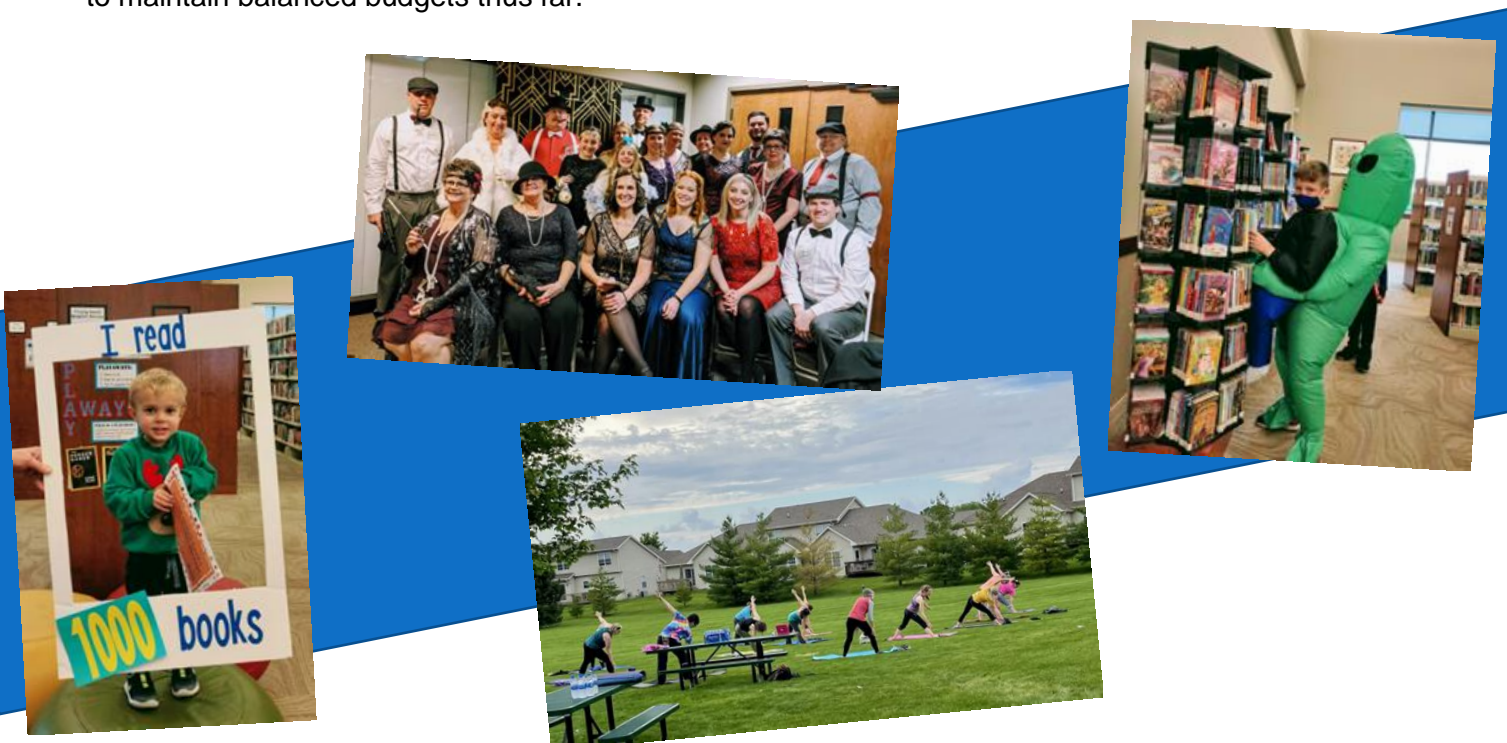
FINANCIAL POSITION

The library's financial position is stable. The library board and leadership team have managed the annual budgets carefully to meet the needs of the community, maintain the current facility, and save for the next expansion without overburdening the community.

Recent and near-term financial pressures include:

- Minimum Wage Increases. The annual increases in the Illinois minimum wage affect the wages paid to library staff and the cost of services involved in maintaining the facility and grounds.
- Inflation and Supply Chain Issues. These affect the cost of materials and supplies.
- Aging Facility. The building, new in 2010, is now old enough to require more repairs, maintenance, and equipment replacement.

Unlike for-profit companies, the library cannot raise prices to compensate for these cost increases, but the overall stability of the library's finances and the generous support of our community have helped us to maintain balanced budgets thus far.



MISSION, VALUES, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

MISSION STATEMENT

Together we create welcoming spaces where all are free to learn, connect, create, and grow.

VALUES STATEMENT

We believe reading improves lives.

We are passionate about literacy and lifelong learning.

We are a welcoming and safe space for everyone.

We ensure access to information for people of all ages, abilities, and means.

We value diversity in our programs, our materials, and our community.

We connect our community to ideas and to people.

We are responsible stewards of public resources.

We love what we do.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Our goals, objectives, and the resulting programs, services, and activities all fall under one or more of our three strategic priorities.

Welcoming

Wherever and however we serve our community -- in our building, out in the community, or in our virtual spaces -- we strive to create a welcoming and safe space for everyone. We want to make using our library as simple as possible and make every encounter a positive one.

Learning, Creating, and Growing

Every decision we make about items for our collection, methods of providing information, and library programming focuses on helping our community members learn more about their world, create their own contributions, and grow as individuals.

Connecting

We see our library as a place to connect people to people, people to information, and people to their community. Our programs help people see new perspectives, learn something new, or simply enjoy activities together. We are a place where people can gather for these purposes.

GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

WELCOMING

Maintain an efficient, clean, safe, and welcoming facility for work, study, library programs, and community meetings.

- Maintain the facility and grounds
 - Annually inspect the building and grounds with library staff and the board’s building and grounds committee. **Did an initial cleanup of the mechanical room near the employee entrance. Reorganized space and discarded old and unused stuff. Had preventive maintenance done on the fireplace. Repaired flagpole. 2023 Inspection by Building and Grounds Committee was completed September 25th. All items identified on last inspection resolved as of July 2024.**
 - Budget sufficient funds to cover maintenance and repairs. **Part-time Building and Maintenance Staff Member hired in August 2023. Multiple small projects completed by new staff member. Requested a proposal from Engberg Anderson Architects to prepare a Capital Repairs Plan.**
 - Establish a method for staff members and patrons to report problems with the facility or grounds. **In-place on staff intranet. Weekly checklist with priority items being created for new staff member by Director.**
- Make the facility easier for patrons to use
 - Assess the arrangement of shelves and furnishings annually and make changes as needed. **Furniture rearranged slightly in Children’s area to make better space for activities. Removed computers from children’s area due to lack of usage. Researching ways to use that space for passive programming and additional kid’s activities. Purchased two bins to experiment with retrofitting existing picture book section to flip-front configuration. Planning ongoing to rearrange several sections to create space for a Middle School Collection that would bridge the gap between juvenile fiction and teen. Added new flip-front bins to children’s area, primarily for Board books. Rearranged young adult area to make it more specific and welcoming to teens. Rebranded as Teen Space with signage. Added computers to Teen Space. Removed juvenile magazine shelf and repurposed area. Repurposed juvenile magazine shelf into a literature display for the main foyer – saving space and making that area more accessible.**
 - Update directional and informational signage. **All endcap signs reviewed and updated. “Do not climb” sign added by light table. ☹ Temporary signs added to better identify New Arrivals in Juvenile and Juvenile Graphic Novels. New “shelf topper” sign brackets ordered for those and other areas. Sign ordered to make it easier to find the restrooms. New Bathroom directional sign installed. Erected temporary signs using new “shelf topper” brackets and collected feedback on color and font. Finalized wording and placement of shelf top signs throughout library. Placed order for actual (non-temporary) signs. Will be installed as soon as received. New Shelf-talker Subject Signs added to Juvenile NF. Permanent Collection Signs professionally printed and added to tops of shelves, replacing temporary signs. Roku Stick display moved to nearby location to allow space for sign promoting DVD New Releases. Initial Signage added to direct patrons to new genre sections in Adult Fiction.**

- Assess the arrangement of the collection annually and make changes as needed. **Beginning plans to arrange adult fiction according to genres, and to provide a section of books specific to middle school aged students. Created a Middle School collection near the Teen Area. Genrefication Committee created. Plans made to reorganize Adult Fiction late Fall/Early Winter. Picture Book section being relabeled in preparation for flip-front bins throughout section. Grant application through Rotary for Flip-Front bins. Adult Fiction reorganized and placed in sections based on genre August 2024.**
- Review the layout of the facility annually for American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance and accessibility. **Hired a consultant who conducted an ADA Self Evaluation that included several recommendations for improvement. Genrefication procedures for Adult Fiction created and staff trained. Relabeling is now underway. Series information and full author's names will now be available on spine labels for Adult Fiction. Relabeling completed in Adult Fiction.**
- Ensure the facility is safe for patrons and staff
 - Post emergency exit paths and storm safety information.
 - Review safety procedures regularly with staff members. **Planning emergency training for staff training day in August. Emergency training completed. Took staff volunteers to complete CPR training. 4 staff completed CPR and AED training provided by Cornbelt EMT's. Purchases additional LED flashlights and lanterns in case of power outage. Reviewed tornado procedures with all staff. Painted curb outside front door with safety paint to make it easier to see, especially near handicapped parking spots. Reviewed procedures to maintain two visible staff members as much as possible on evenings and weekends. Completed annual sexual harassment prevention training with staff. Scheduled review of Fire and Tornado safety procedures at April 2024 Staff Meeting.**
 - Assess staff work areas at least annually for potential safety issues. **Removed and replaced frayed area rug behind help desk. Took time at January staff meeting to have discussion related to improving staff safety. Moved small carts to a new location to relieve crowding in south workroom. Rearranged East workroom to clear aisles and reduce crowding. Placed tape on floor of storage closet to demark available areas. Removed rug from behind Help Desk due to safety issues.**

Equip and encourage library staff to provide excellent service to our patrons.

- Define our service philosophy and integrate it across all library programs and services. **Draft of service philosophy has been created and edited by leadership team. Currently out for final comments by staff. Service Philosophy document adopted. Review of Service Philosophy added to Orientation checklist for all newly hired staff.**
- Provide regular training for staff members in a variety of patron-support skills. Purchased Niche academy to provide staff training. **All public-facing staff completed Hoopla training on Hoopla platform. All non-shelver staff completed live chat reference training on the Niche Academy platform. Three staff members registered for ILA Conference in Springfield. Held day-long staff training day with special speaker on Reader's Advisory. All relevant staff members completed a training worksheet in support of new catalog. Staff members are creating and accessing L2 accounts in order to keep better records of all training completed. Hosted "Enneagram in the Workplace" workshop at 2024 Staff Day to promote understanding and better work relationships. All staff completed the iEq-9 inventory and received a full report.**

- Create and maintain written procedures and patron service protocols. – **Additional staff procedures to promote quality control have been devised by leadership and implemented by Circulation Manager. Began recording quality controls issues and issued first quarterly report to staff. This will give us a baseline to compare how we are improving on these important patron service metrics. Completed second quarterly review of quality control issues. Moved many regularly needed procedures to the Notebook feature on staff intranet to make them easier to find. Completed third quarterly review of quality control issues. Training materials for new desk staff was reviewed, updated and improved. Several new sections added to Notebook on intranet.**
- Empower staff members to provide proactive service and try new solutions to meeting patron needs. **Live Chat Help offered as a new way to interact with the community and answer questions. Added one additional Notary who works on shifts that often have none. Completed procedures for Book a Librarian service, that will allow patrons to reserve a time with library staff for assistance with computers, job search, eBooks and other tasks. Book a Librarian service now active. Added time to Alyssa’s schedule to make time for additional training in cataloging. Assistant Director doing a full review of extra tasks done by each staff member. Reviewing need for additional off-desk time for staff with off-desk duties. Additional staff hired to ensure that Assistant Manager and Office Manager have sufficient off-desk time for their professional duties. Added another notary.**

Maintain patron-centered policies and procedures that reduce barriers and simplify access to library materials and services.

- Establish a schedule for policies to be reviewed by the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) committee, the Library Leadership Team, and the board’s Policy Committee. **Review schedule for board Policy Committee has been created. Numerous policies reviewed by staff and Board Policy Committee.**
- Establish methods for patrons to provide feedback. **Currently conducting a paper/online survey to allow patrons to provide feedback on recommended reorganization of Adult Fiction section according to genre. Marketing Coordinator asked to explore new methods to encourage feedback on existing social media platforms.**
- Review our “We Had to Say No” list quarterly to identify opportunities to provide new services or change existing procedures. **Ongoing. Last done April 2022. Reviewed and updated March 2024.**
- Identify common patron questions and issues related to library materials and services and create support materials or programs to address them. **Binders added in both children’s and teen areas with list of recommended books for various levels and interests. All eReader platforms have revised instructions (Libby, Cloudlibrary, Hoopla.)**

Anticipate and provide access to technology that best serves our patrons’ needs.

- Maintain the library’s existing technology and repair, replace, or upgrade as needed. **Video projection equipment in Edgar Room is being replaced with wall mounted HDTV. Completed. Also added equipment to allow use of Edgar Room for hybrid Zoom meetings. Added technology to allow both microphones and AV equipment to be used simultaneously. Made it easier to use microphones in Edgar Room. Replaced or are in the midst of replacing all public use computers with new models. Added public pc’s in Teen Space. Replaced mini-split unit which provides HVAC for server room. Contract for VOIP phone system researched and signed. VOIP phones installed. Added two iPads**

based on needs identified by programming staff. Updated aged laptops for checkout and staff use.

- Identify technology-related obstacles or bottlenecks and make changes where possible. **Unreliable fax machine is being replaced with fax service that will work through public copier. Completed. Direct “scan to email” functionality has also been added to public copier and staff trained on its use. Mobile Printing has been frustrating and overcomplicated for many years. Added a direct Wi-Fi printer to allow easy printing directly from most cell phones and mobile devices. Identified issue with delivery of text notifications. Purchase of Patron Point software (July 2024) will fix this issue. Worked with IHLS to identify and prioritize a solution for all SHARE libraries.**
- Improve patron access to library services through mobile devices. **Staff have been encouraged to strongly promote use of the new SHARE app. Flyers promoting SHARE app have been created. Materials to promote use of the new SHARE app were distributed at Music Festival. Live chat help now available via the Share app. Patrons may also access live library help by texting the library at 447-442-1898. (Texts are answered in the library’s live chat software.) Continued promotion of Share App. Uptake has been strong and usage is increasing each month.**
- Regularly review leading-edge technologies and technology-related solutions used by other libraries and adopt cost-effective solutions that work for our library and patrons. **Director is reviewing analytics software to aid in better targeting collection development efforts. Director and Trustee Kevin Kelsey strongly promoted and supported adoption of “discovery layer” for library catalog at IHLS, which was approved. MPL is on list of first libraries to adopt the new software this Fall. “Discovery Layer” will work in place of our existing online catalog both in library and online, will be more user friendly and will solve many problems associated with the current catalog. Mahomet has volunteered to be in the first group of libraries to adopt the Aspen Discover Layer, expected to online in December 2023. Preparatory steps have been completed by library staff. Aspen-based Catalog ready to debut in January 2024. Aspen Catalog in operation. Added NewsBank “America’s News” to offer online access to the News Gazette, and a variety of other regional and national newspapers. Received notification of State of Illinois provision of multiple databases/services at no cost to library. Will be educating patrons on these resources starting this fall.**
- Support patron use of technology by providing assistance and training. **Completed procedures for Book a Librarian service, that will allow patrons to reserve a time with library staff for assistance with computers, job search, eBooks and other tasks.**

Enhance our library facility by increasing the existing footprint and providing new spaces for connection and community.

- Hire an architect to create a concept design and cost estimate. **Completed.**
- Apply for a Public Library Construction Grant. **Essentially complete and will be submitted by April 15th. Submitted. Letter confirming that we qualify for a State grant of \$1.6 million was received, however, also noted that no funding existed for the program for this year. Application will be re-estimated and re-submitted in future years until funding is available. Began discussions of benefits of procuring local share of funding prior to appropriation. Further research will be conducted. Met via phone with Steve Shaffer at State Library to discuss grants and benefit of procuring local share early. He does not recommend it. 2024 Grant Application to be submitted by April 15th. 2024 grant**

application completed. Notified that we qualify but once again, no State funding is available.

- **Create a fundraising plan for funding the expansion. Policy Committee and Board meeting in April 2022 to consider creation of 501c3 foundation to support library. Board approved moving ahead with creation of a foundation. John Howard and Kevin Kelsey have begun research, reviewing documents and identifying potential foundation leaders. Kevin K. has been holding meetings with potential foundation leaders. Jim Miller and Kevin Kelsey have agreed to jointly share leadership for new foundation. Potential foundation board members are being approached. Have recruited 5 persons to serve on initial Foundation Board so far.**
- **Evaluate the feasibility of creating an outdoor program space before the construction of a building addition. Discussed possibility and placement of such a structure with architect Joe Huberty. He was positive about the value of adding this to the plan. More research needs to be done. Requested estimate for desired outdoor program space (40'x50' picnic-type shelter with electricity and storage) by Jackson Quality Construction. Estimate of \$200-250K was much higher than expected.**

LEARNING, CREATING, AND GROWING

Promote literacy, a love of reading, and the joy of learning throughout our community.

- **Actively engage with parents to promote early literacy among children ages 0-5. Plans in place to resume Firm Foundations Programming. Firm Foundations Birthday books continuing. Active promotion of 1000 Books before Kindergarten has led to significant increase in participants. Firm Foundations social events and parenting workshops planned and scheduled for early winter/spring 2024. Staff has been instructed to begin promoting Firm Foundations again. Firm Foundations is now operating with several parent workshops and social events per semester.**
- **Provide literacy-based continuing education to caregivers within the community. Firm Foundations parenting workshops booked and schedule for early 2024.**
- **Offer programs and services to support literacy for all ages, partnering with community agencies to provide services to meet identified needs. Cooperated with Project Read in recruiting adult literacy volunteers for community. Actively distribute excellent Early Literacy Calendar provided by the United Way. Assisted Rotary Club of Mahomet in picking and procuring books for every third grader in MS Schools. Agreed to partner with kindergarten teachers to provide library tours as incentive for school reading program. 11 kindergarten classes attended library tours in May of 2024.**
- **Promote resources to help patrons in every age group discover their next great read. Reading Guide binders have been prepared by the Youth Librarian and made available in both the juvenile and Teen sections. Speed Book Reviews offered as a program at September Rotary Club Meeting. Curated Book Bundles now offered for E, JUV and YA books. Multiple curated lists have been added to the catalog by Youth Librarian using functionality of Aspen Catalog. Purchased "Recommends" module which will offer new avenues to promote reading suggestions using the Patron Point Software.**
- **Promote reading and library resources outside of the library. Library staff providing "pop-up libraries" at Mahomet Farmer's Market in June and July. Director spoke to Senior's group at Mahomet Christian Church to promote library resources. Staff set up at Junior**

High to promote library card sign-up. Registration forms sent out ahead of time for students wanting to get cards.

- Support book clubs both within and outside of the library. **Ongoing New Nostalgia Book Club to be offered in February. Added Graphic Novel Book Club. Continued support of Critical Conversations Book Club. Added very popular cookbook club.**
- Create library displays that feature resources to support a variety of interests. **Ongoing. Considering creating additional displays or display space in juvenile computer area. Made space at the beginning of each genre section for a mini-display.**
- Make the library a portal to learning opportunities and resources throughout the community. **Initial discussions are happening to take part in a University of Illinois grant to create computing partnerships to support mental health and social-emotional well-being among students, staff and caregivers/parents in Mahomet Seymour School District.**

Provide a variety of materials and resources in physical and digital formats.

- Optimize the library collection by:
 - Continually assessing the collection, adding and removing items as needed and moving others to off-site storage;. **Weeding and movement to offsite is ongoing. Added Hoopla to our digital offerings based on patron requests. Significant progress has been made in weeding and arranging the adult non-fiction collection. Adult nonfiction and fiction have both completed additional weeding. Significant weeding is being done in Picture Books to eventually accommodate flip-front bins throughout section. Weeding of the Large Print collection is currently in process. Many items weeded are being sent to populate large print collections at two local senior centers. Strong weeding done in picture book and juvenile fiction sections. Weeding being done in Adult Fiction ahead of Genrefication. Weeding begun for the first time at off-site shelving.**
 - Improving usage analysis to provide materials most desired by the community. **Director and Business Manager have begun creating reports and spreadsheets to do a more complete analysis of usage by section. Negotiated contract for LibraryIQ analytics software. LibraryIQ software purchased and in set-up phase as of early August.**
- Work with school librarians and teachers to ensure we are providing materials and resources that support the curricula.
- Make the collection more browsable and attract attention to underused materials. **Purchase of shelf-topper sign frames will better help us identify different collections. Special signs designating various popular subjects has been added to juvenile nonfiction. Multiple shelf-topper signs have been added throughout the library. Genrefication Committee created. Plans made to reorganize Adult Fiction late Fall/Early Winter. Genrefication process underway, along with adding series and full author names to spine labels. Adult Fiction fully genrefied as of August 8th.**
- Research and consider creation of a “library of things” (items besides books, audiobooks, and movies) based on community needs and interests. **Currently offering board games and puzzles. Video games being considered as additional resource.**

Promote greater information literacy throughout our community.

- Become a go-to source for accurate, unbiased information about local, national, and world affairs. **Planning of Difficult Discussions programs underway. Conversations initiated**

with Braver Angels organization, with the goal of doing some cooperative Braver Angels programs at the library.

- Provide programs, materials, displays, and online resources for our patrons that will encourage information literacy and help patrons identify and access relevant and trustworthy sources of information.
- Leverage existing programs and materials from other sources. **Working with League of Women Voter to provide voter registration, materials to help patrons register to vote on library computers, and other materials related to elections. During elections, we point patron to LWV materials on candidates.**
- Provide focused staff training on information literacy. **Researching ALA grant-funded program called Super Searchers as a resource to train staff.**
- Offer opportunities for the public to learn from original sources about issues in the community.

Offer programs for all ages and interests that encourage creative endeavors and personal growth.

- Offer age-specific and all-ages programming for a variety of purposes, including entertainment, education, creative endeavors, and opportunities for personal growth. **Multiple summer programs offered in 2022. Signed up for Illinois Libraries Present, a partnership among libraries to offer live online programs with nationally-known authors and speakers. A full slate of Fall programming was planned by programming staff and is being offered. A full slate of Winter/Spring Programming has been planned and is being offered. Summer 2023 programming offers a variety of opportunities. Writing groups and theater based programs added to the list of offerings to promote creativity. Ongoing. Full slate of Winter/Spring programming has been planned and announced. Summer 2024 programs added to schedule. Researching viability of adding a Youth Programming Assistant to support children’s programs. Added part-time Youth Programming Assistant. Fall schedule of programming nearly completed.**
- Identify community programming needs and seek to fill them by:
 - Promoting programs offered by other community organizations,
 - Partnering with other community organizations to create new programs, or **Working with Rock Counseling Center on a cooperative program. Cooperating with Rock Counseling to offer “How to Love your Family if you Hate their Politics” workshop in November 2023. (Completed Nov 2, 2023.) Added additional program in cooperation with Rock Counseling.**
 - Creating new library programs.
- Foster a sense of the library as a community space by establishing activities for each age group, including children, teens, adults, and seniors. **Elementary explorers and teen drop-ins were added for Fall 2022. Adult Crafternoon added.**
- Provide culturally-aware programs that represent a diverse range of voices and viewpoints.
- Develop programs that encourage and promote the use of library materials and services. **An Evening with the Director for Friends of the Library included promotion of new and upcoming materials.**

CONNECTING

Increase our library’s role in the community.

- Seek new ways to take the library and library resources out into the community. **Requested permission to set up pop-up library at Farmer's Markets in Summer of 2022. Participating weekly in Farmer's Market. Director actively seeking speaking opportunities outside of the library. Director attended two grand openings for local businesses and is increasing involvement with Chamber events. Booth at Music Festival. Staff set up at Junior High to promote library card sign-up. Registration forms sent out ahead of time for students wanting to get cards.**
- Expand partnerships with organizations and individuals in the community. **Met with Parks Dept to discuss cooperative programming. Met with CCFPD to plan an early spring grand opening of Story Walk at LOTW preserve. A group of students from Gies College of Business is researching how libraries partner with social service agencies, what agencies are available and how MPL might better serve patrons with accessing community resources. Actively promoting library practicums for Fall of 2023 for students at the University of Illinois I-School. Grand opening of Story Walk at LOTW preserve. Planned to host Voter Registration Info table by League of Women Voters in January. Additional cooperation including hosting LWV candidates forums being discussed. Partnership with Champaign chapter of Braver Angels being planned. Director has joined Braver Angels organization.**
- Hold community-wide events in partnership with other organizations. **Partnered with Lucky Moon to add pie-eating competition to Board's Ice Cream Social. Partnered with The Main Scoop to offer Ice Cream Social for community.**

Connect community members to information and services they need.

- Promote community programs, services, and organizations. **Check Out Mahomet! effort to encourage both library cards and promote local businesses. Arranged with School District to provide space at library for residents to review new textbooks.**
- Provide space for social services to meet with clients at the library. **AARP Tax Services provided in Edgar Room.**
- Host community forums and speakers on subjects of interest to the community.
- Create a welcome packet for those new to the community. **Initial steps are being taken to create this resource. Welcome packet including folder of materials and library tote bag is now available and being distributed when new community members use the library.**

Help build strong relationships between community members.

- Provide a forum for community conversations. **Library offering space for meeting of Candlewood residents in January to discuss issues with new ownership. Planning underway for Difficult Discussions series to begin in January. Discussions begun with Braver Angels to partner for fall programming in this area. Director has joined Braver Angels organization.**
- Include spaces in the library expansion that allow community members to meet and connect. **Estimates on the cost of adding a picnic shelter to the library grounds have been solicited. (\$200-250K was the estimate.)**
- Offer programs that provide opportunities for social interaction. **Upcoming Ice Cream Social. Ice Cream Social. Ongoing.**
- Connect people to other people with common interests. **Crafting programs, writing workshops and theater programs offer opportunities to meet others with similar interests.**

Involve community members meaningfully in the mission of the library.

- Significantly increase ongoing opportunities for individuals to volunteer at the library. – **Alyssa and John working on an Adopt a Shelf volunteer program. Currently testing it with one volunteer and creating written materials. Adopt a Shelf program is ready to be introduced. Adopt a Shelf program now operating with several volunteers. More promotion of this will happen this Fall. Additional staff member being trained to work with and assist with coordination of volunteers. Fall 2023 included a strong promotion of volunteer opportunities at library. Current number of active volunteers is highest in last 5 years. Partnered with Rotary to provide volunteers for relabeling of picture books. More volunteers added. Volunteer training to assist with Genrefication now available and at least six volunteers have been trained for this project. Began tracking volunteer hours per month and reporting as part of Board of Trustees statistics.**
- Create a structured teen volunteer program.
- Develop new avenues for fundraising for general library expenses and specific projects and programs.
- Explore the creation of a library foundation, with a board made up of community members. **Board approved moving ahead with creation of a foundation. John Howard and Kevin Kelsey have begun research, reviewing documents and identifying potential foundation leaders. Ongoing. Beginning to identify potential foundation leaders. Currently recruiting initial board members. Initial Board co-presidents recruited.**
- Encourage and train community members to participate in advocacy for libraries.

Expand promotional efforts and develop new marketing strategies.

- Improve communication with existing library users. **Created and published 12-page magazine featuring library programs and services. Vendors have been sought and estimates provided of the cost to mail Summer edition of library magazine to all residents. Summer library “Book(let)” mailed to every household in 61853, approximately 6300 households. Fall Book(let) produced and distributed around town and at the library. New signage purchased for use at community events to more strongly brand library booth. Winter/Spring Book(let) created and available at end of December. Additional distribution locations added. Summer 2024 Book(let) being created. Purchased Patron Point software which will offer numerous new avenues to communicate with users. Notably, library notices will be redesigned and sent by Patron Point with significantly more information on them. Made agreement with Gies School of Business to do an experiential learning project in Fall of 2024 that will focus on maximizing use of Aspen and Patron Point software and taking advantage of new functionalities that they offer.**
- Identify and connect with new audiences.
- Create a formal marketing plan. **Staff participated in marketing workshops. Research is being done into the possibility of a part-time marketing/communications staff at library. Advertising for part-time marketing coordinator for library to begin in January. New Marketing Coordinator has been hired effective April 10th. Marketing coordinator is gradually taking over some duties, and has been working on content for website and planning for our booth at Mahomet Music Festival. Review staff time available for marketing. Added hours to the budget for up to 15 hours/week of staff time to be available to be spent on marketing activities. Promoted Leah Dreeste to Marketing**

Coordinator, made more hours available for her use and are testing including several other staff members to the team.

- Include opportunities for interactive communication in our marketing.



LIBRARY EXPANSION

In 2007, library consultants recommended a 24,000 square foot library facility to meet the needs of the growing Mahomet community. Voters approved a referendum to build a 13,000 square foot building. The current library is well used and its only problem is its small size:

- The children's area is small and often crowded with children, families, and caregivers.
- Teens do not have a place in the library to call their own, beyond a few shelves that house teen books and audiobooks.
- There is only one study room. There are tables and study carrels where people can work, but they are in the same large room as the rest of the library and noise is an issue.
- The shelves are overcrowded and we are forced to remove items from circulation that are relatively new and still circulate, simply because we need room for newer items.
- The community needs more areas to gather and socialize and many like to use the library for that purpose, but we have little space for them to do so

The library is seeking to expand the building, but avoid increasing property taxes by:

- Minimizing Costs: The current building will be changed as little as possible and the new portion will be designed with cost efficiency in mind.
- Applying for Grants: The library will apply for a construction grant from the Illinois State Library. If funds are available, we would qualify for a grant covering 49% of construction costs.
- Seeking Donations: The library will seek donations from private individuals and entities, especially to cover the costs of special projects, such as an outdoor programming venue.
- Using Reserves: The library board saved the proceeds from the sale of the prior library building and has worked to build on those reserves over the past decade. Some of the reserves will be held for building maintenance, but a significant portion will be used on the expansion project.

